

Sidebands

The Newsletter of the EAST GREENBUSH AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION



www.egara.club

June 2017

President - Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP
Secretary - Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR

Vice-President - Ridge Macdonald, KB2HWL
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor - Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ

Over 200 Attend Hamfest 2017 Rain Fails to Dampen Spirit of Hams from All Over Northeast

Gray skies and rain did not get in the way of EGARA's 14th annual Hamfest on May 13th, with over 200 turning out to enjoy the friendship of their fellow hams and some good deals on new and used gear. According to admission data, amateurs drove in from Vermont, Massachusetts and New Jersey, as well as from across upstate New York.

Hamfest was weeks in the planning and the event itself actually got underway the night before when a team of EGARA volunteers arrived at the Masonic Temple to load up supplies needed for the event. Many then arrived at 4 am Saturday morning to set up at the East Greenbush Fire Department Pavilion, which the club rented for the Hamfest. Because of pre-planning and a good turn out by club volunteers, set up went smoothly and within 90 minutes the facility was ready to go. Vendors began showing up by 6 am, with the first early bird buyers appearing at the gate by around 7 am. Fortunately, the rain held off until almost 10 am, giving tailgaters an opportunity to sell their offerings in the parking lot before the downpour began.

(continued on page 2)



Hamfest 2017 went smoothly thanks to an excellent turnout by club volunteers

Hamfest Quick Stats

Gate Admission = 203
EGARA Volunteers = 17
Prizes Awarded = 18

May 20th VE Session Produces a New Round of Licensed Operators & a Lucky Winner

EGARA's latest VE session saw four new hams licensed and another four successfully upgrade their current tickets. In addition, a brand new mobile radio was awarded to Ben Kurdt of Albany, who passed his Tech exam. The radio was purchased with proceeds from the estate of Silent Key Howard Caudle, W2RSU, whose family made the bequest to EGARA. The May

20th session was one of three sponsored by the club each year. The others are in January and October.

Club member Peggy Donnelly, KD2LMU, also served for the first time as a VE examiner. Peggy has worked hard to go from Tech to Amateur Extra and a VE in a matter of months.

The May 20th session produced four Novice Class, three General Class and one Extra Class licenses. The following EGARA VE's administering the tests: Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP, Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, Peggy Donnelly, KD2LMU, Dave Williams, N2VLQ, Bob Stark, KA2EXK, Bill Leue, K2WML, and Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ.

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Newly licensed Tech Ben Kurdt receives his new mobile radio at the May 20th VE session

Next Club Meeting June 14, 2017 - Field Day Preparations!

Now Pay Your Dues Online! www.egara.club/pay-dues It's Fast, Easy & Secure!

Hamfest 2017 = Success

(continued from page 1)

The day was also packed with giveaways, with a total of 18 door prizes being awarded at a rate of one every 15 minutes. They included gift certificates, antennas, tools, and books, with prizes being donated by ARRL, Radio Oasis, Trojan Electronics, and Harbor Freight Tools.

The day closed out at 1 pm with the big prizes of the day, including a 50/50 raffle, and a dual band HT radio. Many hams had also remained for the Grand Prize drawing of a brand new Yaesu FT-7900R dual band mobile radio and antenna valued at over \$275.00. The winner was John Maddalla, WB2HTZ, a founding member of EGARA who had returned from his winter home in Florida to attend Hamfest.

"I had a really good day and won a great prize... being with all of you! It was worth flying back from Florida so I wouldn't miss the hamfest," said Maddalla. "I promised (EGARA President) Tom Scorsone, that when I got back I would pay my dues, and Tom made sure I did.... about 5 minutes before I won the grand prize! Hmmm..."

Tony Flores, KA2BIX, traveled from Hudson Falls to win the runner-up prize of a Wouxon HT dual-band VHF/UHF radio, valued at approximately \$100. The winner of the 50/50 draw was Greg Fiozzo, KD2HRD, of Schenectady who took home a cash prize of \$50.

Despite the cool temperatures, hams who attended found themselves warmed by fresh coffee and hot breakfast sandwiches. By lunchtime, made-to-order hamburgers, cheeseburgers and hot dogs were rolling off the grill. Those with a hankering for sweets were offered apple pie with the option of turning it into "ala mode" with vanilla ice cream.

A final tally indicated that attendance for this year's Hamfest almost equaled the turn out for the 2016 event, despite the less than ideal weather. Overall, Hamfest 2017 was judged to be a great success, securing the club's finances for the coming year. Perhaps club member John Maddalla summed it up best:

"I want to say that I am very proud to be a member since 1998 and to say that we have the best bunch of Amateur Radio operators in the country. Our Hamfest is always welcoming and warm-hearted to all and I hope it continues for many more years to come."

The Team That Made It Happen

Hamfest 2017 was a success because of the great team of EGARA volunteers who gave their time and energy to guarantee it was a great event.

Planning began almost as soon as Hamfest 2016 concluded, with EGARA Vice president Steve VanSickle's comprehensive list of suggestions to make Hamfest 2017 even better.

Board members met several times in the weeks prior to the event to build an action plan and then take steps to ensure everything was in readiness. These steps included ordering prizes, printing tickets and staff tags, and assessing what supplies and food needed to be purchased.

Planning was also made easier thanks to an inventory of Hamfest supplies made by club

members on April 1st at the Masonic Temple.

"We could have never pulled off Hamfest without the help of this great team of people," said club President Tom Scorsone. "I think this year's event was one of the best ever because of them and each member has my thanks and gratitude."

The 2017 Hamfest Team included the following EGARA members:

• Tom Scorsone	Chief cook and bottle washer
• Chris Linck	Talk-in
• Ridge Macdonald	Cashier
• Lee Hatfield	Signs
• Russ Greenman	Vendor table prep
• Dave Smith	Cook
• Tim Antonacci	Cook
• Steve VanSickle	Public Address & Prize Giveaways
• Dave Williams	Cook
• Andy Sullivan	Cook
• Peggy Donnelly	Raffles and setup
• Dave Gillette	Photography
• Steve Marsh	Traffic
• Debbie Marsh	Traffic
• Paul Dahoda	Parking
• Bryan Jackson	Admissions Gate
• Bill Leue	Setup



The day's big winner, John Maddalla (left), WB2HTZ, receives the Grand Prize of a brand new Yaesu FT-7900R mobile radio and antenna. Club Vice President Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, handled the day's prize drawings, awarding a total of 21 prizes during the Hamfest.

Hamfest 2017 Photo Gallery

See the complete photo gallery on
the EGARA website: www.EGARA.club
Photos by Dave Gillette and
Steve VanSickle



May 13, 2017

EGARA May Meeting Minutes

- The May meeting of the EGARA was called to order at 7:13 PM by President Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP. The minutes of the previous meeting were not read. The Treasurer's report was not presented;
- Tom thanked the membership for their participation at the Run for Literacy at Schodack Island State Park. He noted that the recent rain has flooded much of the property since the race was held. The Rensselaer County Literacy Committee has requested our assistance again next year at the park;
- On Saturday, May 13th, volunteers will be needed to setup at the East Greenbush Fire Department grounds at 4AM due to a scheduling conflict by the fire department which will not allow set up to take place the night before the event. Areas include: kitchen, banners, tables, and PA system. The equipment will be loaded at the Masonic Temple on Friday between 6 and 6:30 PM. Tom noted that the PA speakers were recently re-installed in the pavilion. Commercial vendors include: KJI Electronics, Radio Oasis, Dave and Gary Schneider. Tom mentioned that a significant portion of the club operation budget is generated by the proceeds from the Hamfest as well as keeping annual dues at low cost. Past Hamfests have made it possible to buy new equipment for field day and training materials. The club plans to purchase a new video projector for use during meetings and training. Following the hamfest, a celebratory dinner will be held at Mercato's – free to all who volunteered at the Hamfest;
- Bryan showed the new admission tickets. We will provide ID tags for the volunteers. Club membership applications will be available, as well as signs regarding the VE Session on May 20th. Reservation signs have been made for the tables. There was some discussion regarding the weather forecast for Saturday. Job assignments were reviewed. Bryan discussed the history of the club's new website www.EGARA.club and he received many compliments for the web site and for the club newsletter Sidebands;
- Lee Hatfield discussed the upcoming Xenia Hamfest and the changes to the logistics to support this annual event;
- Ridge mentioned upcoming Skywarn training to be held at the Bethlehem Town Hall this Friday, May 12 at 7PM. There was a group discussion regarding lightning protection;
- Chris Linck will be operating from France on May 23-31. He will visit the Laval and Normandy areas. Listen for N2NEH/F on the 14 and 18 MHz bands;
- A new point system is being introduced which will reward volunteers for helping at club events. The rewards are still being discussed and more information will follow;
- The 145.110 repeater at HVCC is back in service (see story on page 7);
- Refreshments were on hand for all in attendance: there were two varieties of gourmet pizza from Mercato's and beverages;
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

--de Steve VanSickle WB2HPR / Secretary

It was a dark
and stormy night.



Got a Story to Tell? Tell it Here!

If you've got a good story to tell about ham radio, we invite you to share it with the readers of Sidebands! Maybe you've discovered a trick or two that's improved your shack. Or, perhaps you've just completed a ham project that you're proud of and want to inspire others. If so, feel free to write it up and send it along! Remember, pictures always help to tell a story too, so consider including a snapshot or two.

You don't need to be Shakespeare either. We'll take your rough draft and help you turn it into a polished gem.

Email your literary masterpiece to Sidebands at:
W2RBJ@outlook.com.

Running for Literacy - EGARA Steps Up

The annual Rensselaer County *Run for Literacy* was held on Sunday, May 7th, with EGARA club members once again providing communications support along the race route. Wet weather held down the number of participants this year, but the day was still successful in terms of raising money for the cause. Some 150 individuals signed up and submitted their \$30 entry fees, although only 50 or so actually raced.

This year's race was held at a new location, with the Schodack State Park providing the course for the 5K run. Because the area is fairly flat, the club was able to use hand held radios to communicate in Simplex mode on 146.550 mhz. Thanks to a good response among club members, the course was fully staffed with no gaps in coverage.

EGARA members who generously donated their time included Andy Sullivan, KC2WWJ, Carl Greenman, KC2UTC, Russ Greenman, WB2LXC, Paul Dahoda, KD2JMM, Steve Marsh, KC2USX, Debbie Marsh, KC2ULU, Bill Leue, K2WML, Peggy Donnelly, KD2LMU, Ridge Macdonald, KB2HWL, Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ, Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP, and Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR.

The event allowed the club to both provide the necessary backup to the Literacy organization, as well as to serve as a practice session for providing communications during an emergency situation.

For those members who were unable to participate, EGARA will provide radio communications for both the upcoming *Run for Liza* and the *Run for Hope*.



A last minute check makes sure race locations are covered by the EGARA communications team

Get Ready to Cruise Annual Hudson River Trip Set for August 19th

EGARA members will have the chance to enjoy a day on the water aboard the "Spirit of Albany" on Saturday, August 19th. The cruise will leave from the Albany Port Commission building at 10 am and will return at approximately 2 pm. EGARA member Dave Williams will once again be the Captain and host.

A number of club members sailed the Hudson during the 2016 cruise, with some operating HT radios and making contacts through repeaters accessible from the waterway.

Those interested in joining this year's outing are asked to RSVP ahead of time to secure a spot on board, as space is limited. Anyone wishing to bring lunch and beverages is encouraged to do so as well.

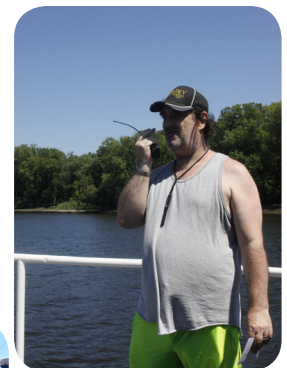
Last year's trip included lots of sunshine and a refreshing breeze as the boat traveled down the Hudson and then back up past the Albany city skyline. The trip also provided ideal scenery for picture taking.

To reserve a spot on this year's voyage, please send your RSVP to Bryan Jackson via email at W2RBJ@Outlook.com.



Peter Mattice, KD2JKV, checks out repeater coverage mid-river

Captain Dave Williams, N2VLQ, will once again take the helm as EGARA members board the *Spirit of Albany* for a cruise down the Hudson on August 19th



A beautiful day made last year's trip memorable for everyone aboard



If It's June, It *Must* Be Field Day!

The weekend of June 24th and 25th are just around the corner and EGARA will once again participate in this classic amateur radio event. Plans for this year call for the club to operate two stations over the entire 24 hour period which starts promptly at 2 pm on Saturday.

Members will be asked to sign up for shifts during the June 14th membership meeting at the Masonic Temple, which will also be the location for Field Day operations. As in the past, the club will provide food and beverages for those who operate during the weekend.



Field Day 2016 -- Making one of the 226 contacts logged by the EGARA team during the weekend

Preparations will begin late Friday afternoon, with volunteers needed to erect antennas and set up the transceivers and the computers which are used to log the club's contacts. To maximize contest points, radios will be run on auxiliary power. The club will also seek media coverage, which also boosts the points score.

This year the club also offered a special incentive to members who will be participating, providing a 25 percent discount and free shipping on ARRL Field Day items, including shirts, hats, pins and coffee mugs. The club paid the price difference and also picked up the cost of shipping.

Field Day is typically the largest single emergency preparedness exercise in the country, with over 30,000 operators participating each year. It is always held on the fourth full weekend of June, beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday and running through 2059 UTC Sunday.

Since the first ARRL Field Day in 1933, radio amateurs throughout North America have practiced the rapid deployment of radio communications equipment in environments ranging from operations under tents in remote areas to operations inside Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). Operations using emergency and alternative power sources are highly encouraged, since electricity and other public infrastructures are often among the first to fail during a natural disaster or severe weather.

Last year, 21 individuals participated the EGARA's Field Day activities with a total of 226 contacts being logged on bands 80 through 10 meters using 100 watts of transmitter power. This year the club plans to operate with two stations.

"By employing two transceivers, we can increase the amount of QSOs we make and, in turn, the number of points we get credit for," said EGARA President Tom Scorsone. "More importantly, it also allows for more club members to operate and practice their skills."

Club members who wish to participate but can not attend the June 14th meeting to sign up, should contact Tom Scorsone to schedule the shift they would like to cover during Field Day operations.



Computer logging software makes keeping track of Field Day contacts fast, easy and reliable

On the Beam

News & Notes

Historic NSS Call Sign Reactivated for First Time in More than 40 Years

By Frank Donovan, W3LPL

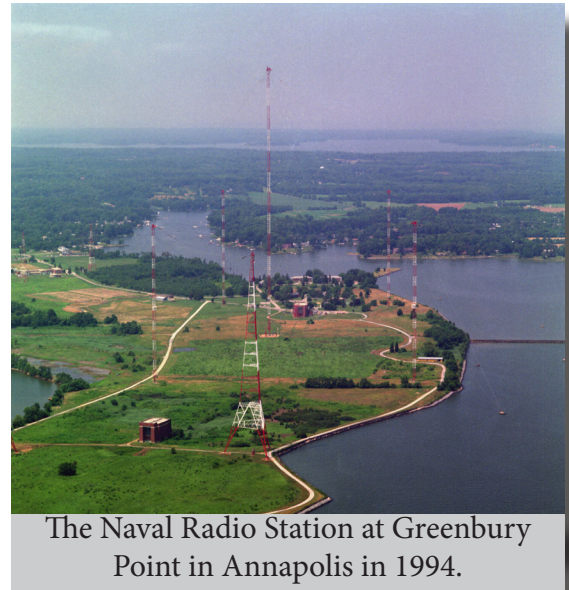
Operators from the US Naval Academy Radio Club (W3ADO) and the Potomac Valley Radio Club (W3GRF) reactivated the historic NSS call sign on May 13-14 during the Armed Forces Day Crossband Military/Amateur Radio Communications Test.

The call sign went live from the former NSS Naval Radio Station that sits on Greenbury Point in Annapolis, Maryland at 1300 UTC on Saturday, May 13, and continued until 0200 UTC on Sunday, May 14.

NSS transmitted on CW and SSB on 4,038.5, 7,533.5, 14,487, 17,545, and 20,994 kHz and listened for callers. All stations that contacted NSS will receive a QSL card.

NSS began operation in 1918 as the Annapolis High Power Radio Station using a Federal Telegraph Company 500 kW arc transmitter and four 600-foot towers, operating in the VLF spectrum. NSS HF operations began about 10 years later, although VLF operation continued into the 1990s. The HF mission was transferred in 1976 to Navy Communications in Norfolk, Virginia. While some of the towers were removed, three lighted, self-supporting towers remain to serve as local landmarks and as navigation aids to boaters on Chesapeake Bay.

A brief video history of NSS is available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWuJ6DB9drw



Repeaters Back in Action

Two local repeaters maintained by club members are now back in service after experiencing equipment failures.

The 147.330 Repeater in East Greenbush is back on the air according to administrator John Maddalla, WB2HTZ. The site now features a brand new unit after the old transmitter failed after several years of service. He reports it may be hard to tell that it is operating because of a very short squelch tail to accommodate the EchoLink and the IRLP Link. Some rigs have a slow recovery to receive from transmit and can make it hard to verify. He suggests sending touch tone out 1, 2. This will trigger EchoLink to come back with a message. Settings are: 147.330 / 147.930 Mhz - PL 146.2 Hz.

Also back in service is the club's Troy repeater on 145.110, PL 94.8. Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP, reports that the machine went down after more than a decade of continuous service due to a failed power supply. Scorsone made the fix with the assistance of Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR. The repeater is located on the campus of Hudson Valley Community College in Troy..

Making a Good Hobby Better Through Post-Licensing Enrichment

By Tim Busch NØCKR

Having developed a successful and well-received one-day Amateur Radio Technician Class, with well over 200 new hams licensed in the past two years, I immediately started receiving requests from the new hams on upgrade classes and “how-to” activities. As a result, I began developing an enrichment program to help our newest hams make their hobby experience even better.

As soon as they become licensed, we encourage all our new hams in the area to check into our Sunday evening “New Ham Net.” On the net, they have an opportunity to learn the phonetic alphabet, establish communication, compare notes with other hams, and ask questions of more experienced operators. The net has been so successful that we’re talking about expanding our one-hour time slot to accommodate more check-ins.

We’ve also had excellent participation with our Get On The Air (GOTA) station during Field Day. GOTA operation is a giant leap toward eliminating mic fright. At our club’s (Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club) first big Field Day event in 2015 (category 19A), we had 30 new hams stop by the GOTA station. Beyond these activities, I am putting together a series of mini-classes. Each segment of this new program teaches specific skills related to ham radio. Following is a partial list:

- Programming Radios and Getting on the Air
 - Soldering 101
 - Multimeter 101
- Build and Use a Roll-Up J-Pole Antenna
 - Build and Use a Satellite Antenna
 - Foxhunts
 - Operating Digital Modes
 - Remote Operation
 - Software-Defined Radios
- Transitioning from VHF/UHF to HF Operating
 - Chasing Awards
 - Learn CW
 - Contesting
 - Build Projects

The kit used in Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club’s Soldering 101 and Multimeter 101 mini-classes. Each class is intended to be no more than two hours at a sitting, so they can be held before a monthly club meeting. The variety of subject matter allows many club members to get involved in leading a topic. Materials kits are prepared in advance, so students walk away with practical items they can use at home.

I’m still in the development stage of several of these sessions, but the overall requirements are not a major undertaking, and they can be delegated among club members. The best promoters of Amateur Radio are the newest members of the hobby. Keeping them interested and excited will be a nice growth engine for your club. This enrichment program is a great way to encourage more club activity. I am happy to help others set up classes or answer questions about this program. Drop me an email at n0ckr@arrl.net for more information.

About the Author: Tim Busch, NØCKR, is an Amateur Extra class ham and was first licensed in 1974.



Getting new hams licensed is just the beginning. Keeping them engaged in amateur radio then becomes the challenge,

Updated Charts of US Amateur Bands Now Available From ARRL

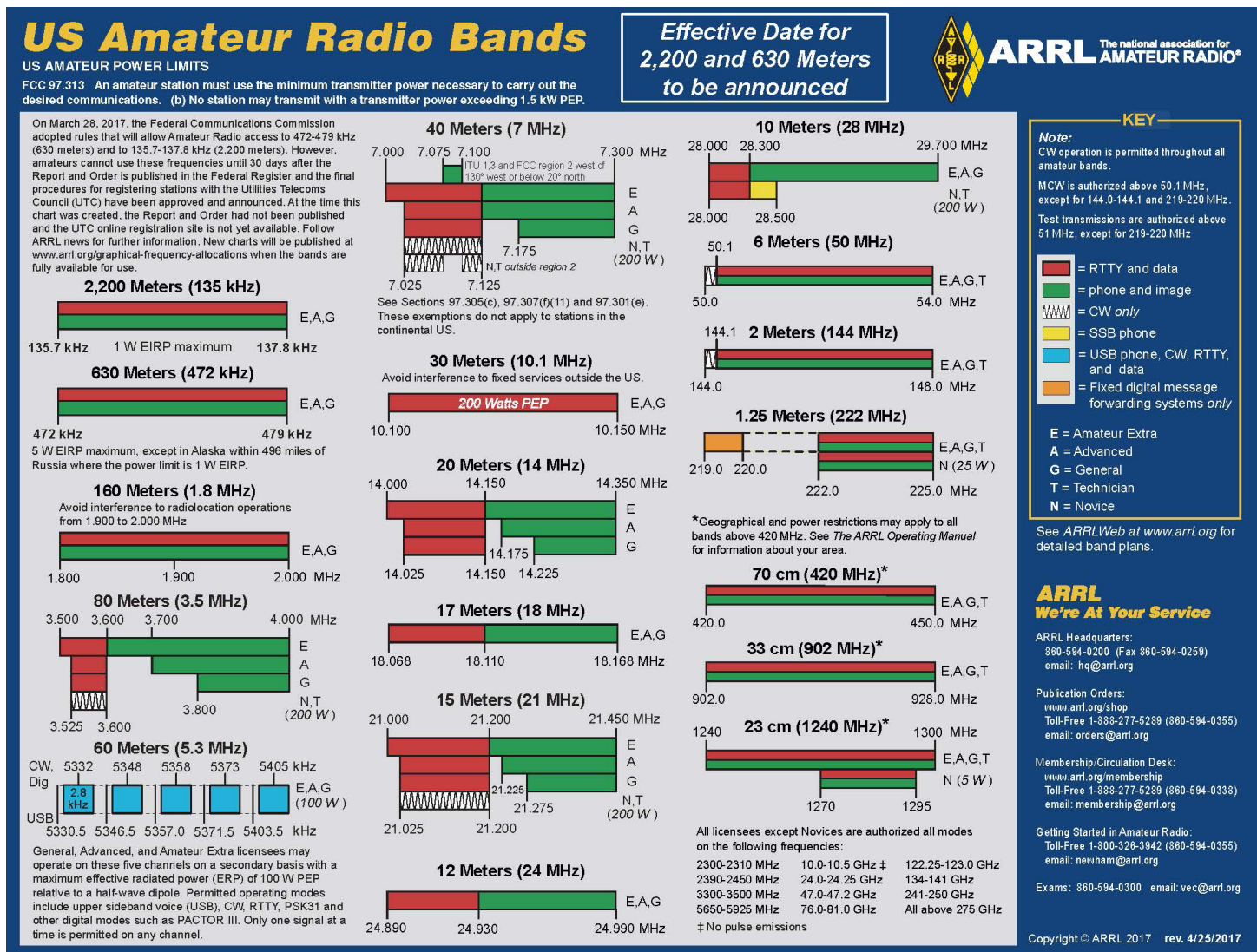
ARRL has revised and updated its "US Amateur Radio Bands" charts, and these now are available for download. These are PDF documents, available in color or grayscale presentations.

The revised charts reflect the new 630- and 2,200-meter bands, but also emphasize that these bands are not yet available for Amateur Radio use. The effective date of the recent FCC Report & Order granting these allocations has not yet been determined, and until the start date has been set, it is not legal under an Amateur Radio license to transmit on either band.

The FCC will publish a notice in The Federal Register "announcing such approval and the relevant effective date." ARRL will announce the UTC notification procedures and the effective date to use these new bands as soon as these are known. At that time, ARRL will update the Amateur Radio frequency charts at that time.

These reference guides are available for purchase in 11 × 17 and 8.5 × 11 formats in packs of 50 from the ARRL Store. Both include an ARRL Worked All States (WAS) map on the reverse side.

To download the new charts, visit: <http://www.arrl.org/graphical-frequency-allocations>



Wave of the Future?

Australia Tests Prototype On-line Licensing Exams

By Fred Swainston - VK3DAC

The Wireless Institute of Australia has been working toward some on-line amateur radio licensing assessments for some time and has introduced a trial exam system as a 'proof of concept' exercise.

There are currently two trial theory assessment tests at the "Standard" licensing level and in future these will include a couple of "Advanced" license theory assessment tests. There is no word on when or if the WIA might move to an on-line amateur operator licensing test system.

This Week in Amateur Radio (TWIAR)

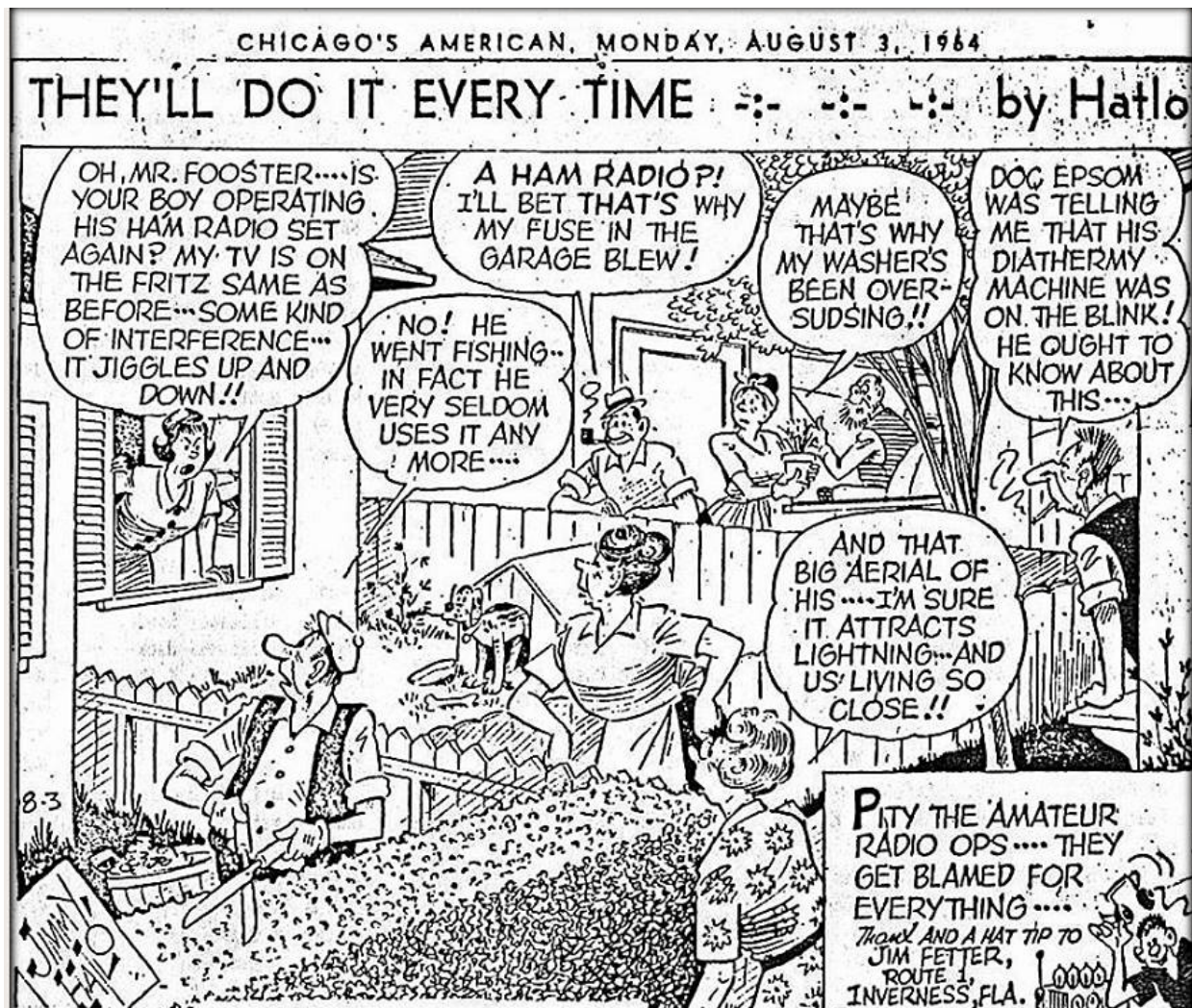
Looking for something to do on a Saturday night? Tune in to **This Week in Amateur Radio** on the K2CT repeater (145.190) on most Saturday nights at 9PM. This weekly news bulletin service is dedicated to news and information useful to the amateur radio community. Along with the news, special segments air regularly including topics such as the Gateway 160-meter net report, the Random Access Thought, the Ancient Amateur Archives, and the technology report.

Still Need to Send in Dues? Pay Online!

Visit the club's website to use your debit or credit card to pay your 2017 dues. It's easy and secure!
WWW.EGARA.CLUB/PAY-DUES

RFI: A Look Back at the Good Ol' Days

There was a time when hams got blamed for causing all kinds of problems and interference. It was even lampooned back in 1964 by the cartoon strip "They'll Do It Every Time" -- Enjoy the memory!



CALENDAR

June 24-25, 2017 - Field Day 2017 - Beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday (2 pm EDT) and running through 2059 UTC Sunday. East Greenbush Masonic Temple.

August 19, 2017 - Annual EGARA Hudson River Cruise aboard the *Spirit of Albany*. Leaves Port of Albany at 10 am from Port Commission Office, 106 Smith Boulevard, Albany, NY 12202. Returns at approximately 2 pm.

September 13, 2017 - EGARA membership meeting, 7 pm, East Greenbush Masonic Temple, 710 Columbia Turnpike, East Greenbush, NY, 7 pm.

October 7, 2017 - EGARA VE Exam Session - 10 am, East Greenbush Community Library.

Pro Tip -

Grounding: Braid vs Solid Strap

Flat, solid copper strap or heavy copper wire have been the standard for making grounding, bonding or high-current RF connections. Meanwhile, braided strap is often used for DC and low-frequency power and grounding connections -- so is it ever acceptable to use braided conductors for RF?

If the connector needs to flex -- such as grounding equipment that has to be moved frequently -- it is OK to use tinned flat weave braid BUT only if it's protected from water. However, never use braided conductors for high frequency connections outside or where it will be exposed to water. Water will be drawn into the braid and will eventually corrode the individual strands, making it much less effective.

Many hams are tempted to use the copper braid from old coax cable and use it for grounding -- but DO NOT use it for RF purposes! While it works fine while inside the protected jacket of the coax cable, once exposed to the elements the braid begins to loosen and corrode, making it inefficient when used in RF applications.



Shinny copper braid quickly corrodes once it's exposed to the elements.



Wanted to Buy

- **Front panel meter for Johnson Viking Valiant** – Steve VanSickle -WB2HPR@ARRL.NET

For Sale

- **Yaesu Model VX-8GR - Price Reduction!** HT dual band 2M/70M, with GPS, case & extra battery \$225.00. Contact Bob Stark at: bob.claudias@gmail.com
- **Heathkit Antenna Tuner Model - SA-2060A** Excellent condition - \$ 300.00. Contact Tom Scorsone by e-mail at: kc2fcp@nycap.rr.com.
- **Ameritron Model Al-811H** – Linear amplifier uses (4) 811's – with manual – great condition - \$700 or best offer; Contact: Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, by phone at 326-0902.
- **Kenwood Ts-480 Hf Rig** – 200 w PEP output, w/manual, cable, and microphone – like new - \$800 obo; Contact: Steve Van Sickle, WB2HPR, by phone at 326-0902.

Looking to Buy, Sell or Swap?

Send your info to W2RBJ@outlook.com

Listings are posted on the club's website too!

The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, (Silent Key) and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to the amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members and the public.